

# News Release



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## *The George Wright Society*

# State Parks' Dr. Denzil Verardo Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

SACRAMENTO – Dr. Denzil Verardo, Ph.D., an author and historian who currently serves as Chief Deputy Director of California State Parks, has been awarded the Cultural Resources Management Award by the George Wright Society for his life's work in the protection and management of cultural resources.

The George Wright Society is a nonprofit association of researchers, managers, administrators, educators and other professionals who work on behalf of the scientific and heritage values of protected areas.

Through its awards program, the George Wright Society seeks to recognize outstanding contributions to research, resource management, and public education in and about parks and other protected areas. The Cultural Resources Management Award is presented every two years. Dr. Verardo will be presented the 2003-04 award at the Society's conference in San Diego in April.

Dr. Verardo is the first state park employee in the country to receive the award. Past recipients have included persons with the National Park Service and the United States Department of the Interior.

Dr. Verardo has been with California State Parks for more than 30 years, beginning in 1971 as a ranger. He has had a broad range of accomplishments over his career. In 1974, for instance, he identified a marbled murrelet chick in a nest he had found at Big Basin Redwoods State Park. Up until that time, no nest of the bird had been found in North America. The discovery of the threatened bird eventually led to the preservation of thousands of acres of old growth redwood, its favored habitat.

Dr. Verardo, with his wife Jennie, co-founded one of the first state park nonprofit organizations to assist in the educational, interpretive and scientific functions of the state park district in which they are incorporated. Today more than 80 such organizations exist, donating more than \$5 million to such efforts.

Dr. Verardo has authored or co-authored eight books and nearly 200 articles on a variety of subjects, including state park history. He has donated the royalties from these works to conservancies for the purchase of additional park land or state park historic preservation project.

During the 1990s, Dr. Verardo was appointed to the California State Parks executive staff. He led a team that developed a modern organizational performance measurement and management system for State Parks, including its natural and cultural resource management program.

In 2002, Dr. Verardo chaired the steering team that planned and conducted the California Cultural Summit, co-sponsored by California State Parks and the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. The first-of-its-kind Summit gathered California's historic preservation and cultural heritage community to assess the state of California's cultural resources and develop action initiatives for the future of those resources.

The George Wright Society was formed in 1980 to foster communication between various disciplines in the fields of resource management and preservation. For protected areas to be effective, the Society states, historians must confer with natural resource managers, foresters with coastal biologists, archaeologists with interpreters, area managers and supervisors with data specialists – and all of these with the public.

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